

L. 10.21

The Incomprehensibleness of God,

IN A
SERMON

Preached before Their

MAJESTIES,

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WHITE-HALL, Decemb. 31. 1693,

By *Richard Lucas, D.D. Vicar of S. Stephen's
Colemanstreet.*

By Their Majesties Special Command.

L O N D O N,

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The Incomprehensibleness of God.

JOB XL. 7.

Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection?

JOB in the foregoing Chapter, carried the Justification of his Integrity so far, that he seem'd to entrench somewhat rudely on the *Justice of Providence*; Zophar therefore to repress this Insolence, and vindicate the Divine Honor, lays before him the *Incomprehensibleness and Majesty of God*. That this is a proper Topick to awe the Rashness, and to chastise the Pride of Man, is evident from hence, that God himself makes use of it to this End, Chap. 38. *Then God answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, who is this that darkeneth Counsel by words without knowledge? where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? &c.*

And if ever it were necessary to possess our Minds with a due Sense of the *Meaness of Man*, and the

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Majesty of God, 'tis now ; now, when *Luxury and Hypocrisie, Loosness and Corruption* do not more openly insult and affront the *Morals*, than *Atheism and Infidelity* the *Faith* of Christianity ; now, when *Scepticism, Heresie and Impiety* assault our Religion with all the Artillery of *Judaism, Arrianism, Photinianism, Turcism* : now, when bold Men trample under foot all *Mysteries*, and under colour of advancing *free and impartial Reason*, do in effect cashier *Revelation*. Never therefore was it more necessary than now to put the Question in my Text, and to invite the World to consider the Consequences naturally flowing from it. 'Tis a Question which implies its own Answer, *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? i. e.* 'Tis past all Controversie thou canst not. The Sense then of the Words is easily resolved into this Proposition: *That God is incomprehensible.* I will therefore,

1. Assert and illustrate this Doctrine in my Text, and then

2. Make two or three Inferences from it.

1. *That God is incomprehensible.* This is an Article of the *Athanasian Creed* ; and if *universal Tradition* may be allowed to weigh any thing, there is no Doctrine in our Religion can lay a fairer Claim to it ; but it needs derive no Strength from *Human Authority*, being asserted in almost so many Words in my Text, and

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and either in express Terms, or immediate, necessary, and obvious Consequence, in innumerable others; and I think all Men who have not abandon'd their *Modesty*, with their *Faith*, must confess, that with respect to *human Capacity*, *infinite* and *incomprehensible* are Terms almost equivalent, and consequently whoever attributes the *one* to God must be obliged not to deny the *other*. All this being clear, I shall not so much labour to prove, as to illustrate, and unfold this Doctrine.

The Heathens painted their *Demiurgus*, to whom they assign'd Eternity, for a Companion in pitchy Darkness, retired within a Cave, which their Poets thus describe :

*Est ignota procul mentique impervia nostra
Vix adeunda Diis—*

Not intimating by this, that they had no knowledge at all of God amongst 'em, but that the *Perfections of the Divine Nature*, were too vast, too high, too deep, what shall I say, *too mysterious* for human Minds, nay for Angels to search out. 'Twas this Notion made the Philosopher exact so much *Modesty* and *Reverence* in all Discourses on Divine Things, which *Seneca* commends as a wise and great Thought.

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Now all this was probably borrowed from *Moses* and the *Prophets*, how near soever God was to *Israel*, yet would not he endure that they should approach too near to *Mount Sinai* to gaze, *Exodus xix. 21.* And how familiarly soever God would be consulted by *Moses*, yet when he desired to see his *Glory*, Chap. 33. *God said unto him, Verse 20. thou canst not see my face. And Verse 23. Thou shalt see my back-parts, but my face shall not be seen.* To the same purpose is that of the *Prophet*, *Verily thou art a God that hidest thy self, O God of Israel our Saviour, Isai. xlv. 15.* and that of *Solomon*, the *Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness, 1 Kings viii. 12.* Under the *Gospel* indeed the *Son of God* is said to have revealed *God to us, John 1. 18.* but yet even this *Revelation* must not be supposed to have exhausted all the *Depths* and *Mysteries* of the *God-head*; for notwithstanding this *Revelation*, we as yet see but as thorough a *Glass* darkly, we know but in part, and prophe^sie in part, *1 Cor. xiii. 9.* He is reveal'd to us, as he was in the *Pillar of Cloud* and *Fire* to *Israel*, to guide our feet into *Canaan*, not to entertain our *Curiosity*; that is, he is sufficiently revealed in order to *Holiness* and *Worship*, but no further; for in all other *Respects*, if under the *Old Testament*, he made *Darkness* his *Pavilion*, under the *New*, he dwells in *Light* inaccessible.

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To advance to *Particulars* ; If in the *God-head* we gaze and pry too boldly into *eternal Generation* and *Procession*, and the *ineffable Unity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, it will but dazle and confound our weak *Faculties* ; as far as the *Scripture* is plain, we may, and must advance, namely, that *the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God*, and yet *there are not three Gods, but one God* ; if we content not our selves here, without a *Philosophical Account* of the *mysterious and inexplicable Unity and Distinction of Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, we shall be more like to lose our selves than find out an *incomprehensible Truth*. All human *Explications*, as far as ever I could observe yet, do but breed new *Doubts and Scruples*, not dissipate the old.

If we enquire after the *Substance* or *Essence* of God, we are told indeed, *John iv. 24. That he is a Spirit*, and so are *Angels and Souls* : but what vast *Distance* there is between that *Self-Existent*, and these *created Spirits* ; alas, what *human Understanding* can comprehend ? When we speak but of *created Spirits*, how little is it that we know of *them* ? We learn indeed from the *Operations* of our own *Minds*, that *Thinking* and *Liberty* belong to *Spirits*, but all our *Attempts* beyond this, look little better than *ingenious GuesSES*, and fancyful *Amusements*. The most subtil *Discourses* on this Subject, seeming to
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me to amount to but this at most, that we rather understand *what Spirits are not*, than *what they are*. A Spirit, 'tis true, Reason and Revelation tell us, has not *Flesh and Bones*, is not made of the same *Stuff with our mortal Bodies*, Luke xxiv. 39. But if we demand what the *Substance* of it is, alas, we can form no *Idea* of this; our *Fancy* grovels, and cannot raise it self above this visible *World*, above *Matter*, above *Body*, above some *pure Ethereal Substance*, or something of that *Nature*, I know not what, which is but a little better *Account* of this *Matter*, for ought I know, than *Homer's* and *Epicurus* his *ὡσεὶ σαρξ*, and *ὡσεὶ αἷμα*, as it were *Flesh*, and as it were *Blood*.

Let us now come to the *Attributes* of God. Here not to mention, that the very *Distinction* between *Essence* and *Attributes*, is meer *Condescension* to the *Weakness* of *human Capacity*; that it is as difficult to conceive *both* to be the *very same simple thing*, as it is repugnant to *Reason* to *divide* and *separate* them. Not I say to mention this, the *Attributes* of God, as they have their *bright side*, so have they their *dark* one too; as far as God has revealed, we stand upon *sure and safe Ground*, but beyond this we know not where we tread; for if we go about to frame our *Notions* of *boundless Perfections*, from some faint *Resemblances* of them in *created Beings*, and to judge of
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God by the actings and movings of our own Minds in these Bodies of Clay, we must needs fall vastly beneath any just and commensurate *Idea* of Divine Excellencies ; and yet this is the highest, this is the utmost Effort of Reason.

All the *Attributes* of God are *infinite* in their *Perfection*, and whosoever goes about to fathom what is *infinite*, is guilty of the Folly of that Country-man in the *Poet*, who sitting on the Bank-side, expects to see the Stream run quite away, and leave its Channel dry ; but that runs on and will do so to all Ages. Thus he that goes about to frame to himself an adequate Notion of *Omnipotence*, and *Omnipresence*, cannot but attempt the Contradiction of limiting the *one*, and manacling the *other*. The Mind which travels in the Contemplation of *Eternity*, loseth its self in the Journey, like an *Eye*, which if it meet with nothing to intercept its Prospect, its *Quickness* doth not find an End, but its *Weakness* makes one.

If we proceed to God's *Moral Attributes*, 'tis certain, that as much as is revealed of them, we do, or may understand aright ; but if we fancy we can comprehend the whole Extent of them, we do but deceive our selves ; for *Wisdom* and *Goodness*, as well as *Power* and *Duration* are *infinite* when ascribed to God and therefore tho our *Moral Habits* have so much,
Resemblance

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Resemblance of these *Divine Attributes*, that the *Spirit* styles them the *Image of God*, Col. iii. 10. and a *Participation of the Divine Nature*. 2 Pet. 1. 4. Yet does the *same Spirit*, with respect to the *Infiniteness* of God's *Moral Perfections*, assert that there are none good, Luke xviii. 19. *None wise but God*, 1 Tim. 1. 17. In a word, all Men that think *soberly*, however taught that the best way of defining or describing the *Perfections of God*, is by excluding and removing from him all the Defects and Imperfections of his Creatures; which is the same thing as if we should say of every *Divine Attribute*, that it has in it all the *Perfection* we can possibly conceive, and *infinitely more*.

The Sum of all is this, Tho God were so far discoverable by the *Light of Reason*, as served to render the Idolatry and Wickedness of the *Pagan World* unexcusable, Rom. 1. tho he were revealed to the *Jew*, and more fully to us under the *Gospel*, to instruct us in the Nature of Religious Worship, and our Obligations to it, yet still God being *infinite*, and his *Perfections* a vast Abyss, there are therefore *Mysteries in the God-head*, which *human Reason* cannot penetrate, *Heights* which we cannot soar, and *Reason* it self, if it be not *drunk with Pride and Arrogance*, will not only acknowledge that it is thus, but also that it is fit it should be thus; for, if Man
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could fully comprehend God, how Great must we be, how little He, we more than Men, He less than God. When the Prophet tells us, that all the Nations upon Earth, in Comparison of him, are but as the drop of the Bucket, or the Grain of the Ballance, *Isai. xl.* and by a clear Consequence all the Knowledge and Understanding upon Earth, if united in one Man, can be but as a little Particle of Light to that eternal Sun, a Drop to that eternal, boundless, and inexhaustible Fountain, how is it possible, that Man should comprehend God!

I will conclude my Reflections upon this Proposition in the Words of Zophar, close after my Text, *Vers. 8.9.* It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea. Having thus open'd and establish'd the Doctrine in my Text, That God is incomprehensible; I will now proceed to make Two or three Inferences from it.

1. To let out the Tumor of Self-conceit.
2. To justify our Belief of Mysteries.
3. To vindicate the Doctrine of Providence.
1. The Consideration of God's Incomprehensibleness, should methinks humble Man, prevail with him to think soberly of himself, and to contain his Enquiries after God, within sober and modest Bounds.

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This is that *Zophar* seems to aim at, witness that sharp Reflection, *Verse 12. Vain Man would be wise, tho Man be born like a wild Asses Colt.* 'Tis obvious to us all, *what* Man is born, and 'tis as obvious, that he grows up into a rational Creature, by slow steps, repeated Instructions, and tedious Experience; and 'tis as evident, that in the height and maturity of his rational Attainments, the Soul how great soever it be in its self, is clogg'd by a lumpish Body, streighten'd by scanty Organs, clouded by Passions, and perverted by Prejudices, which always limit, and too too frequently misguide it, in its *Enquiry after Truth*. This being so, there cannot be a clearer Proof of Man's Folly, than his aptness to be *puffed up* with an Opinion of his Wisdom, nor can any thing more notoriously expose his Ignorance, than his extravagant Pretensions, to an unlimited and an universal Knowledge. What, nothing satisfy this poor Creature, but *the comprehending or discarding Mysteries!* What, can *this Understanding*, such as I have described it, be the *Test and Standard of universal Truth!* Can this *shallow Capacity* measure the utmost Extent of Nature, and the God of it too! Alas, We may with as much Reason pretend to contain the *Waters in the Hollow of our Hand*, to mete out *Heaven with a Span*, and weigh the *Mountains of the Earth in a pair of Scales!* 'Tis true, we have *Revelation*, but
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we ought never to forget that of *S. Paul*, *When I was a Child, I thought as a Child, I spake as a Child*; for in the *brightest Revelations* God talks with us in such Language, instructs and governs us by such Notions, as we in this *our Childhood* are capable of; our Language is that of Men, not Angels, and our Notions such as fit this *State of Mortality*, not one of *Glory or Perfection*. When ever therefore we go about proudly to explicate a *Mystery*, as if it were indeed but an *Idol*, the Figment of Man's Brain, we serve it as the *Ark of God* did *Dagon*, cast it down from the height where it stood to the Earth, and leave it a maim'd and shapeless Trunk.

But what talk I of our *Comprehension of Divine Mysteries*, when there is scarcely the most trifling Product of Nature, an *Ant*, a *Fly*, a *Spire of Grass*, that has not something or other in it that fools our Enquiry, and baffles our Confidence; how much more then the God of Nature who is concealed from us by the infinite Splendour of his inconceivable Glories, and retired within the Veil of his incomprehensible Excellencies and Perfections. Ah! let us then content our selves with *admiring* and *loving* that God, which we cannot yet at least *comprehend*. Let us imitate *Elijah*, who when God passed by, *wrapt his Face in a Mantle*, and stood at the Mouth of the Cave, to *adore* and *worship*, not gaze upon

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his Majesty. Let us content our selves with such a Search after the Knowledge of God, as may sanctifie and exalt our Minds, as may strengthen and establish our Obedience, and enkindle in us ardent Desires after that Heaven, wherein we shall no longer *know in part*, and *see as thorough a Glass darkly*, but we shall *know as we are known*, and *see Face to Face*. In the mean time,

II. *The Incomprehensibleness of God does abundantly justify our Belief of Gospel-Mysteries.*

A Mystery in the Notion of some at this Day, is indeed a very odd thing, that is, something of which we understand nothing at all, and from hence they fasten upon us those insulting Consequences, that we believe we know not what, and that we make Christ in revealing a Mystery to have revealed just nothing at all. Truly, whatever these Men pretend to, there is little Acuteness in this, What, is there no Difference between knowing *all things*, and knowing *nothing*, between a *full and comprehensive Knowledge* and *utter Ignorance*? Blessed be God, the meanest of our People have a better Notion of a *Mystery*, and 'tis this, *That it is a Doctrine or Article, wherein much is revealed, and yet much hidden and abstruse*; wherein there is something plain and intelligible, something deep and inscrutable, something

something that we do or may know, something that we cannot. That there are such *Mysteries* in the Gospel, no Man ought to doubt, when S. Paul asserts, *that we know but in part*. Such a *Mystery* is God, as I have shew'd already, and such a *Mystery* is the *Incarnation of our Lord*. That the *Word* was made Man is reveal'd, and there is no *Term* in this Proposition but what is intelligible enough; but if we enquire into the *Nature* and *Manner* of that *Union*, wherein this *Incarnation* consists, this is to all of us a *Mystery*; and I wonder not if it seem a very contradictory one to a Socinian, whose *Divinity* and *Philosophy*, if we may take his Word, are not able to furnish him with any higher Notion of *Union* than what results from *Coextention of parts*.

This being the Notion of a *Mystery*, to assert the Reasonableness of believing one, when revealed by God, is no more than to assert, that the *Incomprehensibleness* of something involved and wrapt up in a *Divine Revelation*, ought not to supplant our Belief of that which is plain and intelligible. That *secret things belong to God*, but those that are revealed to us and our Children; That the *Shallowiness* of human Capacity is no Objection against the *Veracity* of God, nor ought our *Dimness* or *Dullness* to invalidate or disparage *Divine Authority*; All this is plain of its self, and if it were not, may be made out by an answerable:

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answerable Arguments. To make *Mysteries* stoop and bow down to our Capacities, and if they will not, to reject them, is in effect to devalue them of their Nature, and to make them none. Besides, what Grounds shall we proceed upon in such an Enquiry as this? Shall we judge of Divine Things by Maxims of *Corpuscular Philosophy*? How ridiculous and absurd were this? especially when the *Philosophy* of one Age overthrows that of another, and Time again rather confounds the *Old*, than establishes the *New*. Indeed, in almost every days Experience, something or other occurs to every modest Enquirer into Nature, too wonderful, and too big for our Capacities, so that we are forc'd, either to disbelieve the Evidence of our *Sense*, or to confess the Weakness of our *Reason*. Is it reasonable then to expect that the *Mysteries of our Faith* should be more easie and demonstrable than the *Objects of our Sense*? Or if not, yet, that that *Reason* which is so purblind, in the search of *Natural*, should be a competent Judge of *Divine Things*? It is true, to believe without a Reason for it, is *Credulity*, not *Faith*: But it is as true, that as the *Sovereignty and Goodness* of God, is the Supreme Reason of our *Obedience*, so is his *Veracity* of our *Faith*. So that all that *Reason* can have to do here, is not to reject the *Articles* revealed, because we cannot fathom all the *Depths* and

and Mysteries contain'd in them, but to examine the Authority and *sense* of the *Revelation*, and these being once cleared, to Sacrifice all our doubts and Scruples to our *Faith*.

And as this is most *reasonable*, so is it most *safe* too, and that upon two plain Grounds ;

1. Because thus we worship God with our *Understandings* as well as *Wills*, and captivate our *Reasons* as well as our *Affections* to the *Obedience of Faith*.

2. This will secure our *Faith*, and keep us from Apostatising thorough *Pride* or *Confidence* ; whereas such as stumble at every thing in Scripture, which includes in it any thing *deep* and *inscrutable*, such who indulge to themselves such a *liberty of Prophecy*, as to forsake the received and obvious *sence* of Scripture, if it do not square with their *Axioms* or *Rules of proud Reason*. Such as these, have in all Ages miserably tortured and perverted the Scripture, and adulterated our holy Religion by *sophistical Subtilties* and *bold Fancies*, develtled it of every thing that is august and mysterious in it, debased our *Faith* into *vain Philosophy*, our *Christianity* into mere *Paganism*, divided the *Church of Christ* by innumerable *Schisms*, and multiplied bold and blasphemous *Heresies* from time to time. In a word if we will be Christians, the *Reason of our faith must be resolved into the Veracity of God*, not the *Philosophy of Man* ; and we

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we must *search the Scriptures*, with the generous *Bereans*, to see *whether these things be true or no*; but must not stupidly or arrogantly put the Question of *Nicodemus*, *how can these things be*?

But does not this make way for *Superstition* and *Error* under pretence of *Mystery*? on the quite contrary; whoever forsakes the received, natural and obvious sense of *Scripture*, as he has no warrant to expect the *conduct and guidance of the Spirit*, so has he reason to fear that *fancy* may lead him to *fatal Precipices*. Besides that such a one ought to Remember that wresting the words of *Scripture* by *Criticism*, or its sense by *subtlety* or *Sophistry* is the next step to a down right *rejecting its Authority*. But must we then admit of a sense loaded with *Contradictions*? by no means; But we must take Care, least while we Combat the *Fancies and Notions* of Men, we carry on the War too far, and oppose and fight against the *express sense and Mind of God*. We must take Care too, in the next place, that we be not too forward to charge what is *above our Reason* with *Contradictions*, for this, if it be not it self a *Contradiction* to right Reason, is to *Modesty and Ingenuity*, for 'tis to pronounce of and censure what we do not understand.

Lastly,

Lastly, The Incomprehensibleness of God solves all the Difficulties that clog the Doctrine of Providence. These must be acknowledg'd to be many. To make the actual Concourse or Superintendence of God, in every Folly or sinful Action, in every trifling Production, or Blunder of Nature, to consist with his Dignity and Majesty; To reconcile Confusion and Disorder with unerring Wisdom, a thousand fortuitous and blind Events with eternal and uncontrolable Counsel and Contrivance, Infallibility in Foreknowledge with Uncertainty in Events, Fate and Necessity in the End, with Freedom and Contingency in the Means, this seems a very puzzling Undertaking, as to the promiscuous Dispensation of Good and Evil, the wisest and best Men were sometimes at a Loss to reconcile this with the Wisdom and Justice of God. 'Tis true, a Judgment to come, solves this Difficulty, and it may be, Humility might have done so without it, since the best Men, what Evil soever they met with, have receiv'd more, and suffered less, than they deserved. But it may be, it is more difficult to make this kind of Administration consist with God's Love and Zeal for Virtue, than with his Justice. Again, In our Notion of Perfection to do less good than one can, is a Defect at least, and yet if God had made all things at first, as perfect, or govern'd 'em since as

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well as He could, whence is it, that the World is such as it is. But, if in *temporal Things* only, a *blind and arbitrary Chance* did seem to govern, another Life might rectifie this, but what shall rectifie it in *spiritual Things*? That Grace should be dispersed as unaccountably as temporal Favours, that the *Manifestation of Jesus in the flesh*, should be the only effectual Means to reclaim the World, and yet that He should make his Entrance into it so late, that untimely Death should surprize well inclined Persons in their first Debauches, and pious ones in their first Revolts and Relapses, when others desperately and irrecoverably wicked, sin out Life to the last, fullest and ripest Period; For so much Sin to enter into a World of God's own Creation, and grow to such an Excess, if God had done all he could, to prevent or extirpate it, seems hardly consistent with his *infinite Power and Wisdom*, and yet for God to neglect any Means necessary to the Prevention or Suppression of it, seems no less inconsistent with his *Holiness*; That the Almighty should foresee from all Eternity how small the Flock would be which should inherit Heaven, and how his wretched Creatures would throng in Crowds the *broad way to destruction*, and yet delight to Create a World, which was to be fill'd with so much Sin, and end in so much

much Misery, seems very difficultly reconcileable with his *Goodness*, and yet that he should not foresee all this is utterly inconsistent with his *Perfection*, and particularly his *Foreknowledge*. These and such like Difficulties, the *Manichees* endeavoured to solve by asserting *two first Principles*, an *evil*, and a *good one*, but with what success every Body knows; as to the success of others from time to time in the same Attempt, I'll pronounce nothing: This only I may affirm, that the *Incomprehensibleness of God*, is both a pious and a satisfactory Answer to these and all other Doubts of this Nature; It is enough to say with the Apostle, *Rom. xi. 33.* *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out!* It is but Justice, that we should *stifle our Doubts*, and suspend our Censure of the Divine Proceedings, when we consider how far both *his Counsels* and *his Actions* are raised above our Enquiries. How can we, without the Guilt of Confidence and Rashness, prescribe Rules to *Power*, *Wisdom*, and *Goodness* in their own Nature *infinite*? We know not where God began, nor where he will make an end; his *Wisdom* comprehends a thousand things we can never think of, and his Omnipotence can accomplish ten thousand more, which we can never as

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much as fancy possible. Past, present, and to come, form but one entire prospect to him; and tho things appear *confused, scattered, mangled, and dismembered* to us, to him they appear *uniform, regular and Harmonious*; we can therefore no more judge of the *Wisdom, Justice, or Goodness* of God, by any particular Instances of *Providence* disjointed from the whole, than we can of the Beauty and Spirit of a Poem by some shatter'd, confus'd and incoherent Fragments.

The World, in a Word, is often wont and properly to be compared to a *well laid Dramatick Plot*, which tho to the Spectator who beholds some part only, it seems ravell'd and intangl'd, yet to the Author, who walks within the *Mysteries* of his own Scenes, the whole appears smooth and natural, and if you will have the patience to set it out to the *last Act*, it will appear so to us too. The *Day* is just ready to open, that will decipher all the *Riddles of Divine Providence*, unravel all the Intricacies, and unfold all the *Mysteries* of its elaborate Scenes, and we shall then see *Perfection* rising out of *Corruption*, like Light out of Darkness, *Sin* ending in *Holiness*, and the *Miseries* of all who do not willtully obstruct it in *Happiness*. In the mean time, our business is not to intrude our selves into the *Counsels of God*, to arraign the Conduct

Conduct which we do not understand; much less to reject a Providence, because we cannot discover the hidden Springs, trace the various Windings, and ken the distant Ends of it; But to adore the Wisdom which we cannot fathom, and with an humble awe magnifie and revere those Counsels which we cannot penetrate. Let us follow the Advice of Zophar, Vers. 13, 14 let us prepare our hearts and stretch out our hands towards God, if iniquity be in our hands let us put it far away, and let not Wickedness dwell in our Tabernacles. Then may we securely confide in God, and follow wheresoever his Providence leads; and those Paths which appear to us like Labyrinths and Mazes, will yet prove our next way to our Canaan; for all things must and will work together for good to them that love and fear God.

And now I have nothing more to do, but to convert my Exhortations into Prayers. May the Contemplation of the Incomprehensible Mystery of God, increase our Veneration for our Holy Religion, and secure the Peace of our Bosoms against the Assaults of Profaness and Irreligion on the one hand, and of Pride and Heresie on the other: May God fill our Souls with Faith and Love; and may an awful Reverence and devout Humility guard and fortifie both: May the Spirit of Religion in all of us, never evaporate.

porate in giddy *Novelties* and *damnable* *Opinions*, but exert itself in *solid Virtues* and *great and good Works*.

Lastly, May we all be inspired with a *zeal* for God, a *zeal* that may make us the *great Examples* as well as *Affertors* of our *truly Catholick and Apostolick Faith*; a *zeal* that may effectually contribute to give a stop to the spreading *Leprosie* of *Heresie* and *Innovation*, to root out *Atheism* and *Wickedness*, and to propagate *Godliness* in the power of it throughout these *Realms*. So shall that God who hath promised to *honour those who honour him*, be our strength and *Glory*, our *Confidence* and *Boast* all the day long; and when we have happily finished our *Race*, and bow down under no other weight than that of *Years* and of *mortal Body*, he shall translate us into the *Presence* of his *Glory*, where we shall find the *Seraphin* themselves praising that *Humility* and *Zeal*, which I invite you to here; for they are described in the *Prophet* to have *two wings* to cover their *Eyes*, *two* to cover their *Feet*, and *two* to fly.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, &c.

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